

REMARKS

Reconsideration and the timely allowance of the pending claims, in view of the following remarks, are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action dated February 1, 2006, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 9, and 15, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as allegedly being unpatentable over Yamada '327 (U.S. Patent No. 6,443,327) in view of Yoshiro '042 (JP 2002093042); and rejected claims 3, 5, 16, and 17, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as allegedly being unpatentable over Yamada '327 in view of Matsumoto '993 (U.S. Patent No. 6,504, 993).

The Examiner indicated that claim 10 was allowed and that claims 2, 4, 6-8, and 18-20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants disagree with the prior art rejections noted above. However, in an effort to expedite the examination of the present application, claims 1, 3, 8, 10, and 16 have been amended to provide a clearer presentation of the claimed subject matter and claims 2, 4, 9, 15, and 17-18 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant submits that no new matter has been introduced.

Applicant further submits that, by this Amendment, the features of claim 2 have been incorporated into independent claim 1, the features of claim 4 have been incorporated into independent claim 3, and the features of claims 17-18 have been incorporated into independent claim 16. In so doing, independent claims 1, 3, and 16 are now patentable over the prior art rejections, as indicated by the Examiner.

All matters having been addressed and in view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration of this application, and the immediate allowance of all pending claims.

Applicant's Counsel remains ready to assist the Examiner in any way to facilitate and expedite the prosecution of this matter.

If any point remains in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, please contact the Undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account No. **24-0037**. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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